

US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



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working with the organization, Bowen said.

promised to hold a meeting to private

Bowen said the group wants to raise

to the area concern.

## IEPA to discuss dioxin fears with residents

By JACK COWAN

Of the News-Democrat

COLLINSVILLE — Illinois Environmental Protection Agency officials agreed Tuesday to meet with residents of an East St. Louis neighborhood who have charged the IEPA is ignoring concerns dioxin may have spread to their area.

The group, led by the Rev. Buck Jones, director of Project HOPE, a citizens advocacy group, obtained a promise Tuesday that IEPA officials will meet May 19 with residents living in Rush City, a 10-block area about 1½ miles from a dioxin site in Sauget.

Members of the group said they asked for

the meeting because of concerns dioxin may have seeped into their water from the Sauget site and from Dead Creek in Cahokia.

IEPA officials announced in April that concentrations of nearly 100 parts per billion of dioxin were found in soil samples taken from a site near the Sauget treatment plant. Similar high concentrations have been found in Dead Creek. Concentrations of more than one part per billion are considered hazardous.

Battle Lee Henley, 69, said she was concerned because her basement frequently floods after hard rains.

"The water comes up in my basement,"

she said. "It's clear, but I don't know what's in it. I'm scared. I'm sleeping in that house and I don't want any dioxin in it."

Henley said she organized the push for a meeting with IEPA officials after she discovered a strange taste in tap water coming from faucets in her home. She said she did not know if the strange taste might be caused by stagnant water seeping into her water lines. She asked for tests, but she said she has never received any results from water department officials.

Jones said residents previously requested meetings with the IEPA to discuss dioxin after similar meetings

were held in early April with Sauget and Cahokia residents.

"They promised and promised and promised to hold a meeting," he said.

Jones said the IEPA's reluctance to hold a meeting had reinforced beliefs that the residents were being ignored because they were poor and black.

"The problem that is created is that people think that's the reason," he said.

"There's a lot of fear and apprehension in Rush City," he said. "All they (the IEPA) have to do is meet with the people and tell them they've tested the area and there's no problem. I think then people would be satisfied."